

Testimony for the Committee on the Environment Hearing; 2/21/19 on the following:

HB 6242. An Act Prohibiting Surcharges from Being Levied on Utility Customers to Subsidize Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Capacity.

HB 5002, An Act Concerning the Development of a Green New Deal.

I want to strongly register my support for both of these bills. They address different aspects of the state's move toward a cleaner future less dependent on fossil fuels.

HB 6242 acknowledges the reality of declining use of natural gas in New England as a whole, a situation that Massachusetts has already accepted. The citizens of our state should not be asked to subsidize pipelines for the benefit of natural gas companies when other states are dropping this tax and when the use of natural gas is predicted to drop precipitously. We now know that methane has an even worse impact in the short term on climate. We should be targeting our efforts on our stated goals for renewables and greenhouse gas reduction instead. It is ironic that this tax is still a possibility when monies raised from the surcharge on utility bills that were meant to improve energy efficiency across the state have been siphoned off to plug the budget hole.

HB 5002 presents an opportunity to aggressively widen our efforts to attain a greener future, to get off the fossil fuel diet. There will be many ideas and strategies forthcoming that will be worth pursuing. Let's aim high and think outside the box. I heartily endorse the principles laid out by the CT League of Conservation Voters that social justice must be a strong component of any Green Deal. Low-income communities have too often been left out of the equation. This could provide a boost to our local economies as well, opening up new job opportunities for young people. In our town of Norfolk a plan is being developed that would provide affordable net zero energy consumption housing. Imagine a young family being able to start out with no heating bills to worry about! This is the kind of green deal project that could help young people live and work in our small towns again.

Thank you for the chance to be heard.

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